

HEPATITIS C

IS TREATMENT RIGHT FOR ME?

HOW TO BE YOUR OWN HEALTH ADVOCATE

In addition, it is important to become an effective healthcare consumer and advocate for yourself.

You can do this by:

- Learning all you can about your disease and its treatment. Seek information from Hepatitis C related organizations.



- Getting all your medical and insurance information organized in one place.

This should include:

- Recent test results
- Important doctor's notes from your medical record
- A log with dates and results of surgeries or major procedures
- A list of all the medications you're taking
- Your immunization records
- A list of any allergies to food, medications, latex, etc.
- Upcoming appointments and reminders for required lab work
- Contact information for all your healthcare providers
- Health insurance information
- Emergency contact numbers



If treatment is recommended, you will want to discuss it with your loved ones before making a final decision. Antiviral medications can cause strong side effects and treatment often lasts for half a year (6 months). This may lead to needing assistance from family or friends and taking time off from work.

If you decide not to be treated with medications, your doctor will want to monitor you closely with blood tests and possibly a [liver biopsy](#) every few years to check for damage to your liver. In addition, talk to your doctor about other steps you can take to manage your [Hepatitis C](#).

Some people who originally decide not to have treatment for their Hepatitis C may later decide they want to try antiviral medications.



PREPARING FOR MY DOCTOR'S APPOINTMENT

Receiving a diagnosis of [Hepatitis C](#) can be overwhelming. There is a lot of information to absorb during an appointment, so you may want to consider bringing a family member or friend with you.

In addition, time with your doctor is often brief so it helps to come well prepared. To prepare, try and do the following:

- When you make the appointment, ask if there is anything you need to do before coming in, such as restrict your diet.
- Write down any symptoms you have been experiencing, even if you do not think they are related to the problem.
- Bring a list of medications you are currently taking. Include vitamins, supplement, herbs or home remedies.
- Write down important personal information, including issues related to your home life, job or any major stresses.

HOW CAN I BEST PREPARE FOR TREATMENT?

There are a number of things you can do to improve your health and increase your chances of being able to take your medications as prescribed:

- **Avoid alcohol and drugs.** If you cannot quit, seek help.
- Talk to your doctor about getting the [Hepatitis A](#) and [Hepatitis B](#) vaccines.
- Aim for 7-9 hours of sleep every night and rest when tired.
- **Maintain a healthy weight.**
- **Eat healthy meals:** Strive for a diet low in fat and high in fiber. Include fruit, vegetables, and whole grains. Avoid trans fatty acids and saturated fats.
- **Avoid dietary supplements that may harm the liver,** such as iron or vitamin A, kava, and valerian. Take only the medications recommended by your doctor.
- **Drink 6-8 glasses of water per day.**
- **Exercise:** Be as physically active as possible on a regular basis, balancing rest and activity.
- **Avoid or reduce stress.** Some people find meditation, prayer, or simply a quiet walk to be helpful.
- Engage in activities that give you pleasure and make you laugh.
- **Discuss** your feelings with family and close friends.
- Join a [Hepatitis C](#) support group.

